

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. When strikethrough cannot easily be perceived, or when five or fewer characters are deleted, [[double brackets]] are used to show the deletion. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 1-11 and 14-28 without any prejudice. Please AMEND claims 12 and 13 to be in independent form. Please ADD claims 29-42 in accordance with the following:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (cancelled)
2. (cancelled)
3. (cancelled)
4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)
6. (cancelled)
7. (cancelled)
8. (cancelled)
9. (cancelled)
10. (cancelled)

11. (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) A vehicle information providing apparatus comprising:
information acquisition function for accessing a storage device and acquiring information associated with progress status of a plurality of vehicles before shipping, which information is stored in the storage device; and

information providing function for, via said information acquisition function to refer to the storage device by using an identification information as a key, acquiring information associated with progress status of a specific vehicle corresponding to the identification information, the identification information which is acquired from an information terminal that is connected via a communication line to allow two-way communications and specifies a user of the information terminal or a vehicle, and for providing the acquired information to the information terminal from which the identification information was output,

wherein the information associated with progress status of the vehicle contains a photographed image of the specific vehicle under assembly in an assembly line of a vehicle manufacturer, and

wherein the information associated with progress status of the vehicle, which is acquired by said information acquisition function contains photographed images of at least all vehicles which are under assembly in the assembly line of the vehicle manufacturer and are customizable as the specific vehicle.

~~The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said information acquisition function composites a name of a purchaser of the specific vehicle to the photographed image.~~

13. (currently amended) A vehicle information providing apparatus comprising:
information acquisition function for accessing a storage device and acquiring information associated with progress status of a plurality of vehicles before shipping, which information is stored in the storage device; and

information providing function for, via said information acquisition function to refer to the storage device by using an identification information as a key, acquiring information associated with progress status of a specific vehicle corresponding to the identification information, the identification information which is acquired from an information terminal that is connected via a communication line to allow two-way communications and specifies a user of the information terminal or a vehicle, and for providing the acquired information to the information terminal from which the identification information was output,

wherein the information associated with progress status of the vehicle contains a photographed image of the specific vehicle under assembly in an assembly line of a vehicle manufacturer, and

The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein when the information which contains an image of the specific vehicle and is associated with progress status of the vehicle is provided as a pay service to a purchaser of the specific vehicle, production of the specific vehicle starts after a purchaser has subscribed to the pay service.

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

24. (cancelled)

25. (cancelled)

26. (cancelled)

27. (cancelled)

28. (cancelled)

29. (new) A vehicle information providing apparatus comprising:

an authentication function for authenticating access from a user terminal by a key assigned to a purchaser of a vehicle; and

an image providing function for providing the user terminal with an image data representing the vehicle which is under manufacturing, if the authentication by said authentication function succeeds,

wherein the image data allow the user to check on the progress of manufacturing the vehicle.

30. (new) The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the image providing function provides the user terminal of a video or still image data representing the vehicle in a backbone component assembly process, painting process, or test process.

31. (new) The apparatus according to claim 29, further comprising a storage device for storing the image data representing the vehicle in association with processes of manufacturing,

wherein if the authentication function receives the access specifying the process of manufacturing and the authentication of the access succeeds, the image providing function reads out the image data from the storage device based on the received process of manufacturing.

32. (new) A vehicle information providing apparatus comprising:
 - an authentication function for authenticating access from a user terminal by a key assigned to a purchaser of a vehicle; and
 - an image providing function for informing the user terminal of a scheduled manufacturing time and for providing a real-time image data representing the vehicle that is being manufactured if the authentication by said authentication function succeeds in the scheduled manufacturing time.
33. (new) A vehicle information providing apparatus comprising:
 - an information providing function for providing the user terminal with a schedule information of when the user terminal is allowed to remotely control a manufacturing machine for a vehicle;
 - a receiving function for receiving an instruction to control the manufacturing machine from the user terminal;
 - a transmission function for transmitting the instruction to the manufacturing machine; and
 - an image providing function for providing the user terminal with an image data representing the vehicle which is under manufacturing by the manufacturing machine based on the instruction.
34. (new) A vehicle information providing apparatus comprising:
 - means for authenticating access to vehicle information from a user terminal; and
 - means for providing the user terminal with an image data representing the vehicle being manufactured if access to the vehicle information is authenticated, wherein the image data allows a user to monitor the vehicle being manufactured.

35. (new) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the means for providing the user terminal with the image data provides the user terminal with image data of the vehicle in a backbone component assembly process, painting process, or test process.

36. (new) The apparatus according to claim 34, further comprising:
means for storing the image data representing the vehicle in association with processes of manufacturing,
wherein if the means for authenticating access to vehicle information receives the access specifying the process of manufacturing and the authentication of the access succeeds, the means for providing the user terminal with the image data reads out the image data from the means for storing the image data based on the received process of manufacturing.

37. (new) A method of providing vehicle information to a user to monitor conditions of a selected vehicle, the method comprising:
authenticating user access to vehicle information from a user terminal; and
providing the user terminal with an image data of the vehicle being manufactured if user access to the vehicle information is authenticated.

38. (new) The method of claim 37, further comprising providing the user terminal with image data of the vehicle in a backbone component assembly process, a painting process, or a testing process.

39. (new) The method according to claim 37, further comprising:
storing the image data representing the vehicle in association with processes of manufacturing; and
providing the user terminal with the stored image data representing the vehicle in association with a specified process of manufacturing if an authenticated user specifies the process of manufacturing.

40. (new) A computer program instructing a user terminal to operate as a vehicle information providing apparatus, the computer program comprising:

an authentication function for authenticating access from a user terminal by a key assigned to a purchaser of a vehicle; and

an image providing function for providing the user terminal with an image data representing the vehicle which is under manufacturing, if the authentication by said authentication function succeeds,

wherein the image data allow the user to check on the progress of manufacturing the vehicle.

41. (new) The computer program of claim 40, wherein the image providing function provides the user terminal of a video or still image data representing the vehicle in a backbone component assembly process, painting process, or test process.

42. (new) The computer program of claim 40, further comprising a storing function for storing the image data representing the vehicle in association with processes of manufacturing,

wherein if the authentication function receives the access specifying the process of manufacturing and the authentication of the access succeeds, the image providing function reads out the image data from the storage device based on the received process of manufacturing.